

His Majesties Declaration to all His
loving Subjects upon occasion of the Ordinance
and Declaration of the Lords and Commons, for assessing
all such who have not contributed sufficiently for
raising Money, Plate, &c.

IT would not be believed (at least great paines have been taken that it might not) that the pretended Ordinance of the *Militia* (the first attempt that ever was to make a Law by Ordinance without Our consent) or the keeping Us out of *Hull*, and taking Our Armes and Munitiō from Us, could any way concerne the Interest, Property, or Liberty of the subject, and it was confessed by that desperate Declaration it self of the 26 of *May*, that if they were found guilty of that charge of destroying the title and interest of Our subjects to their lands and goods, it were indeed a very great crime. But it was a strange fatall Lethargy which had seized Our good people, and kept them from discerning, that the Nobility, Gentry, Comenalty of *England*, were not only stripped of their preheminences and Priviledges, but of their liberties and estates, when Our just Rights were denied Us, and that no Subject could from thenceforth expect to dwell at home, when We were driven from Our Houses and Our Towns. It was not possible, that a Commission could be granted to the E. of *Essex*, to raise an Army against Us, and for the safety of Our Person, and preservation of the peace of the Kingdom, to pursue, kill and slay Us, and all who wish wel to Us, but that in a short time inferior Comanders, by the same authority, would require Our good Subjects for the maintenance of the property of the subject, to supply them with such sums of Money, as they think fit, upon the penalty of being plundered with all extremity of War (as the stile of *Sir Edmund Kynton* Warrant runs against Our poor Subjects in *Wiltshire*) and by such Rules of unlimited Arbitrary power,

as are inconsistent with the least pretence or shadow of that Property it would seem to defend.

If there could be yet any understanding so unskillfull and Supine to believe, that these disturbers of the publique peace do intend any thing but a generall confusion, they have brought them a sad argument to their own doors to convince them; after this Ordinance and Declaration tis not in any sober mans power to believe himself worth any thing, or that there is such a thing as law, liberty, property, left in *England*, under the jurisdiction of these men, and the same power that robs them now of the twentieth part of their estates, hath by that but made a claim and entituled it self to the other 19. when it shal be thought fit to hasten the general ruine. Sure, if the minds of all men be not stubbornly prepared for servitude, they will look on this Ordinance as the greatest prodigy of Arbitrary power and tyranny that any age hath brought forth in any Kingdom; other grievances (& the greatest) have been conceived intolerable, rather by the logicke and consequence, then by the pressure it self; this at once sweeps away all that the wisdom and justice of Parliaments have provided for them. Is their property in their estates (so carefully looked to by their ancestors, and so amply established by Us against any possibility of Invasion from the Crown) which makes the meanest subject as much a Lord of his own, as the greatest Peer, to be valued or considered? here is a twentieth part of every mans estate (or so much more as four men will please to call the twentieth part, taken away at once, and yet a power left to take a twentieth still of that which remains, & this to be leavied by such circumstances of severity, as no Act of Parliament ever consented to. Is their liberty which distinguishes Subjects from Slaves, and in which this free-born Nation hath the advantage of all Christendom, deare to them? they shal not only be imprison'd in such places of this Kingdome, (a latitude of judgment no Court can challenge to it self in any Cases) but for so long time as the Committee of the
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house of Commons for examination shal appoint and order ; the House of Commons it self having never assumed , or in the least degree pretended to a power of judicature, having no more authority to administer an oath (the only way to discover and find out the truth of facts) to, then to cut off the heads of any our subjects; and this Committee being so farre from being a part of the Parliament, that it is destructive to the whole, by usurping to it self all the power of King, Lords, & Commons. All who know any thing of Parliaments, know that a Committee of either House ought not by the Law to publish their own rules, neither are their conclusions of any force without the confirmation of the house, which hath the same power of controlling them as if the matter had never bin debated; but that any Committee should be so contracted (as this of examination, a silent Committee ever bore before this Parliament) as to exclude the Members of the House, who are equally trusted by their Countrey, from being present at the counsels, is so monstrous to the Priviledges of Parliament, that it is no more in the power of any man to give up that freedom, then of himself to order, that from that time the place for which he serves, shal never more send a Knight or Burgesse to the Parliament; and in truth is no lesse then to alter the whole frame of government, to pull up Parliaments by the roots, and to commit the lives, liberties, and estates of all the people of *England*, to the arbitrary power of a few unqualified persons, who shal dispose thereof according to their discretion, without account to any rule of authority whatsoever.

Are their friends, their wives, and children (the greatest blessings of Peace and the comforts of life) precious to them? would even their penury and imprisonment be lesse grievous by those cordials, they shal be divorced from them, banished, and shal no longer remain within the Cities of *London* and *Westminster*, the Suburbs and the Counties adjacent, and how far those adjacent Counties shal extend no man knows.

Is there any thing now left to enjoy, but the liberty to re-

bell, and destroy one another? are the outward blessings only of peace, property, and liberty, taken and forced from Our subjects? are their consciences free and unassaulted by the violence of these firebrands? sure the liberty and freedom of conscience cannot suffer by these men. Alas! all these punishments are imposed upon them, because they will not submit to actions contrary to their natural loyalty, to their oaths of Allegiance, and Supremacy, and to their late voluntary protestation, which obliges them to the care of Our Person and Our just Rights. How many persons of Honour, quality, and reputation of the severall Counties of *England*, are now imprisoned, without any objection against them, but suspicion of their loyalty? how many of the gravest and most substantial Citizens of *London*, by whom the Government and Discipline of that City was preserved, are disgraced, robbed, and imprisoned, without any proccesse of Law, or colour of accusation, but of obedience to the Law and Government of the Kingdome? whilst Anabaptists, and Brownists, with the assistance of vicious and debosht persons, of desperate Fortunes, take upon them to break up and rife houses, as publicke and avowed Ministers of a new invented authority. How many godly, pious, and painfull Divines, whose Lives and Learning hath made them of reverend estimation, are now slander'd with inclination to Popery, discountenanced, and imprison'd, for discharging their Consciences, instructing the People in the Christian duty of Religion, and obedience, whilst Schismaticall, Illiterate, & scandalous Preachers, fill the Pulpits and Churches, with Blasphemy, Irreverence, and Treason; and incite their Auditory to nothing but Murder and Rebellion. We passe over the vulgar charm, by which they have captivated such who have been constrained to dispencc with their Consciences for the preservation of their estates, and by which they perswade men cheerfully to part with this twenietth part of their Estate to the good work in hand; for whoever will give what he hath, may hope reb-

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bing; They shall be repay'd upon the publike Faith as all other monies lent upon the Propositions of both Houses; it may be so; but men must be condemned to a strange unthriftinesse who will lend upon such security. The publike Faith indeed is as great an earnest as the State can give, and engages the Honour, Reputation, and honesty of the Nation, and is the Act of the Kingdome, 'tis the security of the King, the Lords, and Commons, which can never need an Executor, can never dye, never be Bankrupt, and therefore We willingly consented to it for the Indemnity of Our good Subjects, of Scotland, (who We hope will not think the worke of it, for being so often and so cheaply mentioned since.) But that a Vote of one or both Houses should be an engagement upon the publike Faith, is as impossible, as that the Committee of the House of Commons for Examinations, should be the High Court of Parliament.

And what is or can be said with the least shadow of reason to justify these Extravagances? We have not lately heard of the old fundamentall Lawes which used to warrant the Innovations, this needs a Refuge even below those foundations: They will say they cannot manage their great undertakings without such extraordinary wayes; We thinke so too, but that proves only they have undertaken somewhat they ought not to undertake, not that it is lawfull for them to doe anything that is inconvenient for those ends: We remembred them long ago, and We cannot doe it too often, of that excellent Speech of Mr. Pym: *The Law is that which puts a difference betwixt good and evil, betwixt just and unjust, if you take away the Law, all things will fall into a confusion, every man will become a Law unto himselfe, which in the depraved condition of humane nature, must needs produce many great Enormities, Lust will become a Law, and Envy will become a Law, Covetousnesse and Ambition will become Lawes, and what Disasters what Decision, such Lawes will produce may easily be discerned. It may indeed by the sad instances over the whole Kingdome; But will Posterity believe, that in the same Parliament this Doctrine was avowed with that Accla-*

mation, and these instances after produced; That in the same Parliament such care was taken that no man should be committed in what case soever, without the cause of his Imprisonment expressed, and that all men should be immediately bayled in all Cases bayleable, and during the same Parliament that Alderman *Pennington*, or indeed any body else, but the sworn Ministers of Justice, should imprison whom then would, and for what they would, and for as long time as they would; That the King should be reproached with breach of privilege for accusing Sir *John Hotham* of high treason, when with force of Armes he kept Him out of *Hull*, and despised Him to His face, because in no case a member of either House might be committed or accused without leave of that House, of which he is a member, and yet that during the same Parliament, the same Alderman should commit the *Earle of Middlesex* (a Peere of the Realme) and the Lord *Buckhurst* (a member of the House of Commons) to the *Counter* without reprehension; that to be a Traitor (which is defined and every man understands) should be no crime, and to be called Malignant (which no body knowes the meaning of) should be ground enough for close imprisonment; That a Law should be made, that whosoever should presume to take Tunnage and poundage without an Act of Parliament, should incur the penalty of a premonition; & in the same Parliament, that the same imposition should be laid upon Our Subjects, and taken by an Order of both Houses, without and against Our consent. Lastly, that in the same Parliament, a Law should be made to declare the proceedings and judgement upon Ship-money to be illegall and voyd, and during that Parliament, that an Order of both Houses should upon pretence of necessity, enable foure men to take away the twentieth part of their Estates from all their Neighbours, according to their discretion.

But Our good Subjects will no longer look upon these and the like Results, as upon the Counsells and conclusions of both Our houses of Parliaments (though all the world knows

even that Authority can never justifie things unwarrantable by the Law) they well know how few of the Persons trusted by them are present at their consultations, of above 500 not 80, and of the House of Peeres, not a fifth part, that they who are present enjoy not the priviledge and freedome of Parliament, but are besieged by an Army, and awed by the same Tumults, which drave Us and their fellow Members from thence, to consent to what some few seditious, Schismaticall persons amongst them doe propose; These are the men, who joyning with the Anabaptists and Brownists of *London*, first changed the Government and Discipline of that City, and now by the pride and power of that City would undoe the Kingdom, whilst their Lord Major (a person accused and known to be guilty of high Treason) by a new Legislative power of his own, suppresses and reviles the Book of Common-Prayer, robbes and imprisons whom he thinks fit, and with the rabble of his Faction gives Lawes to both Houses of Parliament, and tells them they will have no Accommodation, whilst the members sent and entrusted by their Countries, are expelled the House, or committed for refusing to take the Oath of Association, to live and dye with the *Earle of Essex*, as very lately *Sir Sidney Mountague*. These are the men who have presumed to send Ambassadors, and to enter into Treaties with Forraigne States in their own behalves, having at this time an Agent of their own with the States of *Holland*, to negotiate for them upon private instructions. These are the men who not thinking they have yet brought mischiefe enough upon this Kingdom, at this time invite and sollicite Our Subjects of *Scotland* to enter this Land with an Army against Us. In a word, these are the men who have made this last devouring Ordinance to take away all Law, Liberty, and Property from Our people, and have by it really acted that upon Our people, which with infinite malice, and no colour or ground, was laboured to be infused into them to have been Our intention by the Commissions of *Array*.

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We have done ; What power and authority these men have, or will have, We know not, for Our Selfe We challenge none such ; We looke upon the pressures and inconveniences Our good Subjects beare, even by Us, and Our Army, (which the Army first raised by them enforced Us to leavy in Our defence, and their refusall of all offers and desires of Treaty enforceeth Us to keep) with very much sadnesse of heart ; We are so farre from requiring a Twentieth part of their Estates (though for their own visible preservation) that as we have already sold, or pawned Our own Jewells, and coyned Our own Plate, so We are willing to sell all Our own Land, and houses for their relief, yet We doe not doubt but Our good Subjects will seriously consider Our condition, and their own Duties, and thinke Our readinesse to protect them with the utmost hazard of Our Life, deserves their readinesse to assist Us with some part of their Fortunes, and whilst other men give a Twentieth part of their Estates, to enable them to forsee the other Nineteen, that they will extend themselves to Us in a liberrall and free proportion for the preservation of the rest, and for the maintenance of Gods true Religion, the Laws of the Land, the Liberty of the Subject, and the safety and very being of Parliaments, and this Kingdome; for if all these ever were, or can be in manifest danger, 'tis now in this present Rebellion against Us.

Lastly ; We will and require all Our loving Subjects of what degree or quality soever, as they will answer it to God, to Us, and to Posterity, by their Oathes of Allegiance and Supremacy, as, they would not be looked upon now, and remembered hereafter, as Betrayers of the Lawes, and Liberty they were born to, that they in no degree submit to this wild pretended Ordinance, and that they presume not to give any encouragement or assistance to the Army now in Rebellion against Us ; which if not withstanding they shall doe, they must expect from Us the severest punishment the Law can inflict, and a perpetuall infamy with all good men.

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